

BEXLEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2020

PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT: PROGRESS UPDATE

Summary

This brief report sets out the current position nationally and in Bexley in regard to Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments.

Recommendation

For information and discussion, and consideration of further lobbying (see section 2).

1. Introduction

On 22 May 2020 the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced that the requirement to publish renewed Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments (PNAs) would be suspended for a year.

PNAs were due to be renewed and published by Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) on April 2021. However, as most resources have been diverted to the COVID-19 pandemic response, an extension of the term of the current PNAs was agreed at national level to reduce unnecessary extra pressure on local authorities, local pharmaceutical committees, pharmacies, and other partners.

DHSC's announcement means that renewed PNAs will not need to be published until April 2022, but HWBs will retain the ability to issue supplementary statements to respond to local changes and pharmaceutical needs during this time should this be required.

The NHS Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services Regulations 2013 will be updated to reflect the extension.

2. The current position in Bexley

We have not initiated work on the next PNA due to capacity and a need to divert our resources to respond to the pandemic. It should be noted that a desktop review of suppliers has indicated that the number able to carry out this specialised work has reduced since we carried out our last PNA.

The work to produce a PNA takes approximately 9 months. Ordinarily we would seek a supplier in April 2021 to ensure publication on or before April 2022. Timescales will be subject to resources, capacity, and how the pandemic continues to affect the work of the statutory partners. It should be noted that the recent announcements regarding a potential Coronavirus vaccine may impact on pharmacies having capacity to support PNAs in 2021. The Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to lobby for a further extension to the timetable.

3. Summary of Legal, Financial and Other Implications

We are aware that the number of companies available to provide specialist support and production of PNAs has reduced in recent years and it may be necessary to seek authorisation from procurement for a contract waiver in due course.

The NHS (Pharmaceutical Services and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 place a duty on local authorities and health and wellbeing boards to produce a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. The composition of PNAs and how this work is to be conducted is prescribed in the Regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/349/contents/made>

Local Government Act 1972 – section 100d List of background documents

The current Bexley PNA: <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/health-and-social-care/bexleys-public-health-strategies/our-plans>

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